

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Alexandria has been a municipal corporation since 1877. Alexandria is a Home Rule Charter City and operates with a “Weak Mayor” form of government. The City of Alexandria is committed to serving the public in an efficient, effective and professional manner. The purpose of this Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is to review existing services and facilities and reflect on the impact of forecast growth upon said facilities and services. Contents include:

- An overview of existing municipal facilities;
- An overview of other community facilities;
- A description of municipal boards and commissions, and
- Objectives and Recommendations for Community Facilities and Public Services.

II. EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

City Hall – 704 Broadway Avenue

The City’s Administrative Offices are located at 704 Broadway Avenue. The facility was constructed in the late 1960’s as a joint Police Department/Fire Hall. It was converted to “City Hall” in 1995 and is in excellent condition. The main floor of the building contains 11,191 square feet with an additional 1,836 square feet in a garage and 4,312 square feet in the basement. The main floor of the facility houses the City’s administrative offices including the City Administrator, Assessor, Building Inspection, Planning, Street Commissioner and Park Superintendent’s remote office, Finance, Council Chambers and three conference rooms. The lower level, contains only storage and heating/mechanical equipment. The structure is ADA compliant notwithstanding the basement. Currently administrative space needs are adequate; however, as the city continues to grow additional office space and personnel is anticipated to be needed.

Fire Hall - 302 Fillmore Street

The Fire Hall was built in 1994 and is in excellent condition. The 17,000 square foot facility includes five doors (bays) with two drive-throughs, SCBA cascade room, backup generator, maintenance shop, meeting/training room, library, decontamination shower, sleeping quarters and, kitchen facilities.

The services provided by the department include fire suppression, heavy rescue (extrication), public fire safety education & prevention, inspections/ pre-plans, haz-mat response. Since 1989 the department has had the exceptional ISO insurance rating of “4”.

The AFD service area covers approximately 135 square miles of land or 60 percent of Douglas County. In the past five years the Alexandria Fire Department has responded to an average of 178 calls. The average response time for the first unit to respond is 4.14 minutes with an average of 25 firefighters of the 30 member department responding to all incident calls. The City and all or portions of the followings townships are served by AFD: Alexandria, Carlos, Homes, Hudson, Ida, La Grande, and Lake Mary. The AFD includes one full-time (Fire Marshal) and one full-time (Maintenance Person) on staff and 30 volunteer professionals, for a total of 32 personnel. All the firefighters are trained and certified to Firefighter I level and all are trained First Responders. Six members are Emergency Medical Technicians.

The Alexandria Fire Department has 10 units of up-to-date fire apparatus as follows:

- 2 – 1250 GPM Pumper Trucks (1992, 1986)
- 1 -- 1500 GPM Pumper Truck (2002)
- 1 – 1500 GPM Aerial Platform Snorkel 85' Ladder (1975)
- 1 – 3000 Gal. Tanker Trunk with pump (2005)
- 1 – 1800 Gal. Tanker Truck with pump (1988)
- 1 – Heavy Rescue Truck fully equipped (1998)
- 2 – 4WD Grass Rigs (1993, 1990)
- 1 – Command Vehicle (2002)
- 1 – Fire Marshal Vehicle (1992)

Alexandria Police Department - 216 7th Avenue West

The Law Enforcement Center houses the Alexandria Police Department, Douglas County Sheriff's Office and the Minnesota State Patrol.

The Alexandria Police Department is comprised of eighteen (18) licensed officers and five (5) civilian employees. The APD provides around the clock services in the City of Alexandria.

APD programs include Drug Abuse Resistance Education; School Resource Officer; Police Accountability Conferencing; Citizen's Police Academy; Bicycle Patrol; Operation I.D.; Crime Alert Network; McGruff House, Vacation House Checks, Safe and Sober and, the West Central Minnesota Narcotics Task Force and Abduction Task Force.

Public Works/Streets

Public Works/Streets facilities include two independent structures:

310 Agnes Blvd.

The Public Works/Street complex at this location includes two separate structures.

The main building houses offices and equipment. The equipment includes: three front end loaders, two motor graders, two street sweepers, one bi-directional tractor, five snow plow truck, six snow haul trucks, three ½ ton pick-ups, tree one ton trucks, hoist and welding equipment. The building was built in 2002.

The second building houses equipment and supplies. The equipment includes: steamer, one car, two steel rollers and tree trailers. The building was built in 2005.

Other Community Facilities

- Post Office: 519 Elm Street. This structure is brick and was constructed in 1977 and expanded in the late 1990's. The post office serves the area within an eight-mile radius and provides typical postal service.
- Douglas County Hospital: 111 17th Avenue East. The current hospital was built in 1955. Various expansions have occurred over the past few decades. Some of the highlights are as follows:
 - 1974 Expansion of various service areas and bed capacity to 101.
 - 1981 Bed capacity increased to 130 beds and expansion of current radiology and outpatient facilities.
 - 1994 New emergency center and main entrance remodeling.

- 1998 New radiation oncology unit which is a collaborative service between Douglas County Hospital and CentraCare/St. Cloud
- 2002 New surgery center. This center includes seven operating rooms, recovery rooms, outpatient procedures and outreach clinics.

The Hospital houses 130 beds and features a regional emergency/trauma center, an oncology unit and MRI capabilities. The Hospital employs over 600 people, including over 58 active physicians, with a total annual payroll of over \$23.4 million. Each year it is estimated: 645 babies are delivered; 15,635 emergency visits are processed; 4,957 surgeries are conducted; 239,739 new prescription orders are processed; 30,493 radiology procedures occur; and, 4,726 people are admitted. Average hospital length of stay is 3.5 days, with sixty percent of revenue generated by Medicare and other state/federal dollars.

- Public School: Alexandria School District #206 has five different school sites within the City of Alexandria corporate limits including three elementary schools, one middle school and a high school. Additional schools within the District are located in Carlos, Garfield and Milona.
 - i. Washington Elementary School is located at 515 Jefferson Street and was built in 1935 and expanded in 1948, 1963, 1985 and 1994. The building is in good condition provides education for grades K-6 with an average teacher student ratio of 22.2 - 1. Capacity is 530 current enrollment is 421. The school district will be leaving this site for a new elementary school if a September 2007 referendum passes.
 - ii. Voyager Elementary School is located at 203 Co. Rd. 44 NW and was built in 1988. The building is in good condition and provide education for K-6 with an average student teacher ratio of 1 - 23.3. The capacity is 650 and current enrollment is 625.
 - iii. Lincoln Elementary School, located at 1120 Lark Street was built in 1952 and expanded in 1978 and 1990. The structure is in good condition and houses education services for grades K-6 with an average teacher student ratio of 24 - 1. Capacity is 625, current enrollment is 553.
 - iv. Discovery Middle School, located at 510 North McKay Avenue opened in 1994 and is in excellent condition. This structure serves grades 7-9 with an average teacher student ratio of 1 – 17.2. Capacity is 1,200, current enrollment is 1,047.
 - v. Jefferson Senior High School, located at 1401 Jefferson Street was built in 1957 and expanded in 1963, 1978, 1979 and 1993. The structure is in good condition and serves grades 10-12 with average teacher student ratio of 17.9 - 1. Capacity is 1,200, current enrollment is 1,068. The graduation rate is 94%. Discussions regarding the construction of a new high school have occurred regularly over the past few years. Alexandria Technical College has expressed interest in re-use of the current structure.
- Douglas County Courthouse: 305 8th Avenue West. The original brick structure was constructed in 1898 and expanded in the late 1960's, 1973 and, 1978. Minor additions were completed in 1987. The building is in good condition and provides office space for the County Administrator, Assessor, Auditor, Attorney, Court System, Surveyor, Treasurer and other county-level offices.

- Douglas County Public Works: 509 3rd Avenue West. This structure is located west of the municipal parks buildings and housing the County public works offices and facilities.
- County services (old Central Junior High School) are located adjacent to the county courthouse. Services housed at the facility include public health, HRA, University of Minnesota Extension Service, Lakes Area Recreation (pool and gymnasium), license bureau, social services and senior services.
- Douglas County Library. The library recently relocated to the former Central Junior High School Building, from 117 7th Avenue West. The library features nearly 60,000 published items, several computers and various other materials. The library is part of the Viking Regional Library System and has access to holdings of over 330,000 items from eleven libraries in six counties.

III. MUNICIPAL BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

The City of Alexandria has several boards, commissions and committees that shape the policies and decisions of City government. The City encourages citizens to volunteer to serve on these entities and provide their input. A brief description of each entity and its duties follows:

Airport Commission

Consists of three members appointed by the City Council for three year terms. The Commission is charged with the duty of administering the airport, making all decisions relative to airport use and capital improvement. (Day-to-day operations of the airport are conducted by the Airport Manager.) The Commission generally holds its regular meeting once a month, with special meetings concerning items that need immediate attention held on an as needed basis.

Airport Zoning Board of Adjustment

Consists of five members appointed by the City Council for indefinite terms. The Board reviews proposed variances to the Airport Zoning Ordinance concerning such things as height restrictions and land use in the airport approach zones.

Alexandria Area Economic Development Commission Joint Board

Consists of six members appointed by the City Council for three-year terms. The Board advises the Council on all matters concerning industrial and commercial development, as well as gathers information about the resources and support available locally for business development.

Alexandria Lakes Area Sanitary Sewer District

The City Council appoints three members for three-year terms. The Board establishes policy and provides direction for the District concerning the collection, conveyance, and treatment of wastewater. It meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the District offices at 2201 Nevada Street in Alexandria.

Board of Health

Consists of three members appointed by the City Council for one-year terms, at least one of whom must be a licensed and practicing physician. It is the duty of the Board to make investigations and reports concerning communicable diseases as directed by the City Council or State Board of Health and to make sure that all statutes, ordinances, and lawful rules concerning public health are obeyed and enforced.

Board of Public Works

Consists of five members appointed by the City Council for three-year terms. The Board oversees and regulates the repair, maintenance, and distribution of the City's public utilities in cooperation with the City Council.

Building Board of Appeals

Consists of seven members appointed by the City Council for indefinite terms. The Board meets on an as

needed basis to consider appeals to rulings made by the City Building Administrator concerning the Uniform Building Code.

Cable TV Commission

Consists of seven members appointed by the City Council for two-year terms. The Commission acts as a liaison between cable TV subscribers and providers in the City and advises the Council on related matters.

Community Recreation Board

The City Council appoints two members to this Board for three-year terms. The Board oversees the budget and policies of Lakes Area Recreation. It meets the fourth Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm.

Economic Development Board

Consists of five members appointed by the City Council for three-year terms. The duties of the Board are to review tax increment financing applications, conduct tax increment financing hearings, make recommendations to the City Council on tax increment financing projects, and advise the City Council on economic development matters.

Handicap Advisory Committee

Consists of at least five members appointed by the City Council for two-year terms. The Committee advises the City Council on matters related to facilities, services, programs, or regulations affecting handicapped or physically disabled individuals.

Highway Committee

Consists of seven members appointed by the City Council for indefinite terms. The Committee advises the City Council on matters of street and highway development, layout, regulation, and maintenance; as well as matters of traffic rules and regulations. Meetings are held at 11:00 am on an as needed basis.

Industrial Park Board of Design

Consists of seven members appointed by the City Council for one-year terms. The Board reviews plans for proposed developments within the Industrial Park and makes recommendations concerning those developments to the Council. The Board meets on an as needed basis.

Joint Airport Zoning Board

Consists of two members appointed by the City Council and two members appointed by the Douglas County Board of Commissioners for two-year terms. The Board is responsible for adopting, administering, and enforcing airport zoning regulations in the airport hazard zone.

Park Board

Consists of five members appointed by the City Council for three-year terms. The Board advises the City Council on matters pertaining to the City Parks.

Planning Commission

Consists of seven members appointed to the City Council for three-year terms. The Commission serves as an advisory body to the City Council in matters of directing the future physical development of the City. The Commission, upon request of the Council, makes studies, investigations, and recommendations to the Council regarding matters affecting zoning, platting and public improvements.

Police Advisory Commission

Consists of five members appointed by the City Council for three-year terms. The Commission advises the City Council on matters pertaining to law enforcement. (Its duties cannot, however, conflict with or duplicate those of the Police Civil Service Commission.)

Police Civil Service Commission

Consists of three members appointed by the City Council for three-year terms. The Commission regulates and supervises the employment, promotion, discharge, and suspension of all officers and employees of

the police department.

Runestone Community Center Commission

Consists of seven members appointed by the City Council for three-year terms. It is the duty of the Commission to oversee the operations of the Runestone Community Center, including employment of staff, maintenance of facilities, and scheduling activities and use of the Center.

Tree Board

Consists of five members appointed by the City Council for two-year terms. The Board advises the Council in writing and implementing the City's annual forestry work plan. Upon request of the Council, it makes studies and recommendations to the Council regarding policies for tree planting, maintenance, and removals. The Board also maintains a list of recommended street tree species to be planted with spacing and location requirements.

Utility Commission

Consists of seven members appointed by the City Council for indefinite terms. The Commission considers and advises the Council on proposed improvements to the City's water and sanitary sewer system. Meetings are held at 3:00 pm on an as needed basis.

Storm Water Utility Committee

Consists of six members appointed by the City Council for two year terms. This Committee is in charge of developing and prioritizing projects on which the City spends the Storm Water Utility Fee.

IV. PUBLIC INPUT

A community survey completed in conjunction with the updating of the Comprehensive Plan requested input from community members regarding municipal facilities and services. Respondents were asked a number of questions. A summary of results relating to community facilities and services follows:

When asked what level of infrastructure/facilities do you want (i.e. paved streets, stormwater management facilities like curb/gutter, parks, trails, community center, library), respondents indicated:

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT
Community center	28	20%
Paved streets	21	15%
More parks	21	15%
Curb & gutter	19	14%
Trails	19	14%
Other	17	12%
Library	15	11%
TOTAL	140	100%

When asked if citizens felt they were informed about City Council decisions, respondents indicated:

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT
YES	27	61%
NO	17	39%

When asked if community members/officials/organizations work together, survey respondents signified:

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT
YES	21	49%
NO	22	51%

When asked if local government is responsive and are services provided equitably, survey results show:

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT
YES	23	56%
NO	18	44%

V. PROJECTED GROWTH

The population is forecast to increase from 9,543 people in 2005 to 15,489 people within the next 25 years based on the projected population. The projected growth will reasonably require the expansion of existing administrative and protection services. Such services will not only result in a demand for increased public employees, but also increased facility space and increased capital equipment costs.

VI. MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES OBJECTIVES AND RECOMENDATIONS

A. Municipal Facilities and Services Objectives

1. To provide for adequate facilities and staff to operate and maintain the essential services for current and future residents and businesses in the community.
2. To continue to serve the citizens of Alexandria in an efficient, friendly, and cost effective manner.
3. To continue to update and maintain facilities and operations.
4. To continue to evaluate technology and the need to incorporate technology in carrying out the functions of the city (e.g. public access television, web page development, internet/email).
5. To provide citizens the opportunity to participate in local government as well as inform citizens of municipal activities.

B. Municipal Facilities and Services Recommendations

1. Upon receiving concept plans, the City shall review its provision of services including, but not limited to, public administration and public protection services such as police and fire service to ensure said services which are reasonably necessitated by proposed subdivisions and must be provided at public expense, can be reasonably provided within two (2) fiscal years of approval of the proposed subdivision. If said services cannot be reasonably provided, the subdivision may be deemed premature.
2. The City should forward copies of all plats to the Transportation Director and Superintendent of Schools in the Alexandria Public School District.
3. The City should continue to work in cooperation with the school district and other taxing entities to coordinate public facilities, if feasible, to minimize the impact on taxpayers.

4. The future site for the high school should be coordinated with the extension of utilities and collector streets to ensure the facility is adequately serviced.
5. When planning a new high school facility, consideration for performing arts auditorium needs and potential joint community recreation facilities should be considered.
6. The City should continue working with Douglas County and the surrounding townships to ensure coordinated growth of land uses, transportation systems and regional recreational areas and trails.
7. The City should continue to provide a web site with current information as a means of informing and updating community members and/or access to city email.
8. The expansion of administrative facilities and capital equipment purchases should be included in a capital improvement/equipment program in view of the following:
 - Need for increases in staffing level: utility billing, roadway maintenance, etc.
 - Need for increases in office space for expanded staff and equipment (e.g. maintenance, water/wastewater treatment operator, etc.).
 - Need for increased public/police protection services.
 - Need for increased fire equipment and facilities.
9. The City shall continue to monitor and assess the condition and adequacy of existing municipal structures. The City shall establish long-term solutions to anticipated building/office space needs. Routine maintenance and repair costs should be allotted for in the annual budget. Reconstruction, remodeling and/or construction of facilities should be addressed in a Capital Improvement Plan.
10. The City shall continue to strive to clarify roles, build trust, communicate openly and work productively together at the departmental level and the elected and appointed official level.
11. Informational meetings between the City Council and appointed board and commissions to discuss important projects should be held routinely.
10. The City shall provide maximum cooperation and assistance to other public agencies in planning and developing facilities and programs to provide a high level of service and avoid duplication of services and/or facilities.
11. New municipal and administrative constructions shall be developed to the same high standards required for the development of private property and shall be subject to review by the Planning Commission and City Council.
12. The City should initiate and organize an annual open meeting with representatives from each City department, elected officials (local and state), representatives from City Boards/Commissions, surrounding townships, Douglas County, School District 206, City Consultants, leaders of active community organizations and other representatives as appropriate. The purpose of the meeting is to share information, build rapport and update each other on issues, plans and goals at the forefront for the following six-month period.
13. City leaders shall strive to lead all staff, public officials, residents, neighborhoods, and the business community in recognizing and embracing existing social, racial and economic diversity within the City of Alexandria.